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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 9th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KUKAN (Slovakia)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 107: ELIMINATION OF RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (continued) (A/48/18, A/48/76-S/25230, A/48/81, A/48/118, A/48/291-S/26242, A/48/423, A/48/438 and A/48/439)

AGENDA ITEM 108: RIGHT OF PEOPLES TO SELF-DETERMINATION

(a) RIGHT OF PEOPLES TO SELF-DETERMINATION (continued) (A/48/94, A/48/207, A/48/211, A/48/307, A/48/330, A/48/357, A/48/384 and A/48/385)

1. Mrs. HASSAN (Egypt) said that faith in the dignity and worth of mankind and respect for individual rights and freedoms, without distinction on the basis of race, sex, language or religion, were among the fundamental principles underlying the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and all the international conventions against racism and racial discrimination. Although over the 50 years of its existence the United Nations had made substantial progress in applying those laudable principles, much remained to be done. Her delegation was convinced that the third decade to combat racism and racial discrimination and the programme of action proposed for that decade would crown the important results obtained during the first two Decades.

2. Further, recalling the Vienna Declaration issued at the conclusion of the World Conference on Human Rights, which stressed the need to eliminate racism and racial discrimination in all its forms, whether traditional or contemporary, her delegation welcomed the appointment by the Commission on Human Rights of a Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and stressed the importance of coordinating the work of the Rapporteur with that of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. In addition she welcomed the decision by the States parties to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination to amend the text of the Convention to allow its funding under the regular budget of the United Nations, since that could only improve the Committee's effectiveness.

3. Recent developments in the situation in South Africa gave cause for optimism, in which connection Egypt supported the current consultations intended to establish the bases of a democratic and non-racial society in that country. Her delegation also welcomed the agreement by the parties to set up a Transitional Executive Council and trusted that at the conclusion of the historical process now under way the elections due to be held in April 1994 could be held as planned.

4. Recalling that Bosnia and Herzegovina was a victim of new racist practices, such as expulsions of populations, the rape of thousands of Muslim women and the detention of thousands of men in prison camps, which, under the vile policy of "ethnic cleansing", were intended to rid the land of its original inhabitants, her delegation stressed that it was absolutely essential for the international community to find a solution to the crisis and make a stand against aggression using all the means provided for under the Charter, for the rules of the international legal order, the provisions of the United Nations Charter and the principles of international law must be uniformly applied throughout every region of the world, a point on which her delegation insisted.

(Mrs. Hassan, Egypt)

5. Egypt had always considered the right to self-determination to be a fundamental right for all the peoples of the world, as recognized and set forth in the United Nations Charter, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Since the founding of the United Nations, Egypt had always supported efforts by the Organization to allow oppressed peoples to achieve self-determination and independence.

6. Her delegation welcomed the considerable progress made in the Middle East with the conclusion by the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel of a mutual recognition agreement and the agreement to establish the foundations for an autonomous Palestinian authority. It was important for the international community to support those peace initiatives and provide the Palestinian people in the occupied territories with sufficient aid to compensate for the long years of suffering they had endured under occupation and enable them to build their own national institutions.

7. While stressing that that new step forward would ultimately allow the Palestinian people to fully exercise their right to self-determination, her delegation invited all Member States to support the most recent Palestinian-Israeli agreement, which was simply a declaration of intent that would require a framework of peace encompassing the entire Middle East region, based on justice and on the principle of exchanging territory for peace.

8. Mr. PARSHIKOV (Russian Federation), speaking under item 107, said that the main objective of the Second Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination had been attained since the process of eliminating apartheid had become irreversible, as confirmed by the most recent developments in South Africa, and the General Assembly of the United Nations itself had decided to lift the sanctions imposed on South Africa. Nevertheless, racism continued to exist and was even growing worse in some parts of the world, so that the international community must redouble its efforts to combat all aspects of racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance of which such vulnerable groups as national minorities, migrant workers, indigenous peoples and refugees were victims.

9. In that connection he drew the Committee's attention to the report of the Secretary-General (A/48/423) containing a draft programme of action for the third decade to combat racism and racial discrimination. His delegation thought that the title of the decade should be amended; he supported the proposal to proclaim a decade to combat racism, racial discrimination and ethnic intolerance.

10. Under the decade, the United Nations should coordinate legislative, administrative and legal efforts at the regional and national levels. In that connection he drew attention to the declaration and plan of action to combat racism, xenophobia, anti-semitism and intolerance recently adopted by the Council of Europe.

11. Russia accorded particular importance to minority rights, on which the World Conference on Human Rights held at Vienna had focused. The Commission on Human Rights should consider how to promote and defend the rights proclaimed in the Declaration on the Rights of Persons belonging to National or Ethnic,

(Mr. Parshikov, Russian Federation)

Religious and Linguistic Minorities. Consideration of the question of establishing, under the Commission on Human Rights, a post of special rapporteur on questions relating to the rights of individuals belonging to national or other minorities should also be expedited. A United Nations convention on the protection and guarantee of minority rights should be adopted.

12. Turning to item 108 (a), he said that because of the process of national renewal and establishment or re-establishment of sovereignty, the issue of the right of peoples to self-determination was equally pressing. While self-determination was one of the basic principles of international law, those to whom that right applied had not yet been identified although it was essential to do so if the international community was to be able to resolve international conflicts. Furthermore, that issue was likely to arise in the future in several other countries, where post-colonial frontiers had artificially demarcated ethnic territories. A flexible formula must be sought which ruled out even the possibility of armed force. It was important to find a way of reconciling the principle of the territorial integrity of States with that of the self-determination of peoples. It must be understood that self-determination did not automatically mean separation and the establishment of new and independent States, nor was it synonymous with isolationism or ethnic separatism. In accordance with the 1970 Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the right to self-determination should not be construed as authorizing or encouraging any action which would dismember or impair, totally or in part, the territorial integrity or political unity of sovereign and independent States. Thus, acts of States which proclaimed their attachment to the principle of self-determination, while engaging in subversive activities against sovereign States and openly supporting armed separatist groups and religious fanatics, could not be tolerated.

13. At the forty-seventh session, his delegation had suggested that real autonomy might be the best formula, as it would make it possible to guarantee the right of ethnic and national minorities to self-determination without impairing the principle of the territorial integrity of States. In that connection, the Russian delegation considered the Liechtenstein initiative, which would be examined subsequently, to be especially timely and useful.

14. Mr. THAKUR (India) drew attention to the recent award of the Nobel Peace Prize to Nelson Mandela and President De Klerk, the two men responsible for the change in South Africa. That event was an acknowledgement of the irreversibility of the process of establishing a democratic and non-racial South Africa. India was particularly proud of that progress, as it had been one of the first countries to speak out in the United Nations against apartheid. The agreement to establish a Transitional Executive Council in South Africa and to hold the first non-racial elections in April 1994 was a historic development. For the first time, the South African people would be able to exercise, without discrimination on grounds of sex, religion or race, their right to elect a Government. The lifting of economic sanctions and the re-establishment of international ties would help to put the country on the road to economic stability and progress in the post-apartheid era.

(Mr. Thakur, India)

15. Despite those reasons for rejoicing, the emergence of new forms of racism elsewhere in the world, as referred to in the report of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) (A/48/18), of which India was a member, could not be ignored. The CERD recommendations merited careful consideration by the General Assembly.

16. Turning to agenda item 108, he recalled that the World Conference on Human Rights, held recently at Vienna, had addressed the issue in a comprehensive manner. After reading out the definition of self-determination contained in the Vienna Declaration, he stressed that recognition of that right was not "to be construed as authorizing or encouraging any action which would dismember or impair, totally or in part, the territorial integrity or political unity of sovereign and independent States".

17. At the close of the twentieth century, nation-States were as varied in their history as in their composition and size. The process of accommodating the conflicting interests of the groups making up those States was precisely what the Charter of the United Nations had envisaged as defining self-determination, in the context of friendly relations among States and in conjunction with the principle of equal rights of peoples. With the adoption of the Declaration on decolonization, the principle of self-determination had evolved into a right. The territories whose people had not yet exercised such a right had been so identified by the United Nations, which had entrusted the task of speedily implementing the Declaration to the Special Committee on decolonization. Fortunately, there were currently only a few territories and peoples which had not yet had the opportunity to exercise that right.

18. Independent nations, consisting of multi-ethnic and multi-religious populations, should focus on their national identities and aspirations. It was for them to decide, and not for any outside agency to dictate, the extent of autonomy which the various groups within a State should enjoy. Recalling that the Secretary-General had warned against the excessive fragmentation of States into ethnic, religious or linguistic groups, which would make it even more difficult to achieve peace, security and well-being for all, he stressed the duty of the international community to emphasize tolerance, pluralism and the coexistence of diverse cultural and ethnic constituents within the framework of a common civilization.

19. Mrs. des ILES (Trinidad and Tobago), speaking on behalf of the 12 States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), recalled that, at the World Conference on Human Rights, held in June 1993, the States Members of the United Nations had unanimously established, as a priority for the international community, the speedy and comprehensive elimination of all forms of racism and racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. On the threshold of a third decade to combat racism and racial discrimination, it was imperative that a new impetus be given to the collective pursuit of that goal and to revitalizing the role of the United Nations in that area, through the inclusion of practical activities in the draft programme of action for the third decade. There was also a need for innovative and pragmatic approaches to the implementation of that programme. Activities should be geared to minimizing tensions within communities and maximizing the participation of all, regardless of their race, religion, ethnic origin or sex, in all aspects of life in their

(Mrs. des Iles, Trinidad and Tobago)

societies. The appointment in 1993 of a Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance would, if afforded full support and cooperation, advance that goal.

20. It should not be forgotten that, while policy makers deliberated as to the origins of racial and ethnic tensions, many innocent people continued to be victims of the despicable and delusionary cause of alleged racial and ethnic superiority. The plight of those victims should be borne in mind as the programme of action for the third decade was finalized.

21. The States of the Caribbean Community supported most of the recommendations made by the Secretary-General in his report on the draft programme of action for the third decade (A/48/423), especially the suggestion that the decade should be devoted to combating racism, racial discrimination and ethnic intolerance. They also believed that the Secretary-General's proposals for seminars, workshops and studies, including a seminar on the role of the mass media in disseminating or combating racist ideas, would be useful. However, over-reliance on such academic approaches should be avoided.

22. At a time when Governments and the peoples they represented were beginning to question their capacity and willingness to pay the price, especially in terms of human lives, of active involvement in United Nations peace-keeping operations throughout the world, more of the Organization's creative energies and financial and human resources must be channelled towards social and humanitarian activities. Member States must demonstrate a greater determination to invest in the future, especially by enhancing the capacity of developing countries to address the root causes of racial and ethnic tensions and conflicts. Unconditional support must be given to the preparation of teaching materials and aids in order to promote education against racism in primary and secondary schools and to train teachers for that task.

23. The CARICOM member States also supported the Secretary-General's proposal to develop a pilot project on intercommunal mediation and negotiation aimed at anticipating ethnic conflicts. The project could, at the invitation of the Government concerned, reduce racial and ethnic tensions through mediation and negotiation. In that regard, CARICOM supported the steps taken by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) to develop early warning and emergency procedures to prevent violations of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. Preventive measures, however, should be instituted in accordance with the principles and other provisions of the Charter of the United Nations. For that reason, CARICOM did not support the call for measures to empower expert human rights bodies to bring massive violations of human rights to the attention of the Security Council, together with recommendations for action. Proper procedures had long been established for bringing threats to international peace and security to the attention of the Security Council. Furthermore, it was the task of CERD to report annually to the General Assembly and make suggestions and recommendations based on the consideration of reports and information received from the States parties. It was therefore inadvisable for CERD to consider at its 1994 session draft procedures aimed at facilitating the submission of its recommendations to the Security Council. There was a need to be wary of the possibility of subordinating the Economic and Social Council to the Security Council and

(Mrs. des Iles, Trinidad and Tobago)

placing the Security Council at the apex of the United Nations system, in a manner which was not intended under the Charter and would not necessarily promote democracy in the Organization's decision-making.

24. CERD performed important tasks. CARICOM expressed support for its valuable work and applauded the decision to finance its activities through the regular budget of the United Nations. Some CARICOM member States had already ratified that important decision by the General Assembly and the others were strongly committed to doing likewise.

25. It was widely acknowledged that the enactment of national legislation against racism, racial discrimination and ethnic intolerance could not guarantee effective protection against that danger. It was also important to recognize that the revocation by the white minority Government of the main apartheid laws would not in itself protect the majority population from the debilitating effects of that pernicious system, which pervaded all aspects of life in South Africa.

26. While CARICOM welcomed the appointment of a special rapporteur on the monitoring of the dismantling of apartheid and the transition to democracy in South Africa, it noted that her restrictive mandate would not allow her to address in a concrete manner the grave inequalities between the minority and majority populations, which would threaten the stability and prosperity of post-apartheid South Africa.

27. Following the lifting of the economic sanctions on 8 October 1993, South Africa would be in need of considerable investment and technical assistance. In his report on the draft programme of action for the third decade to combat racism and racial discrimination, the Secretary-General had proposed the organization of training courses in human rights for the police, the military and the judiciary and also highlighted the need to overhaul the educational system in South Africa. Those measures were insufficient and should be augmented by other concrete steps to address adequately the grave inequalities in all sectors.

28. CARICOM endorsed the position taken by the OAU Ad Hoc Committee on Southern Africa in support of the establishment or restoration of full diplomatic relations with South Africa, following the installation of an elected interim Government of national unity pursuant to the elections to be held on 27 April 1994.

29. The 1993 World Conference on Human Rights had defined the denial of the right to self-determination, as a violation of human rights and affirmed that the realization of that right should not be construed as encouraging any action which would impair the territorial integrity or political unity of sovereign and independent States. The United Nations should proceed very cautiously with regard to any suggestion to change the cases provided for under General Assembly resolution 1541 (XV) for defining an act of self-determination. The peculiarities of the situations facing various communities around the world appeared to preclude the adoption of a specific framework for addressing successfully the yearnings of all peoples for self-determination. The Third Committee should consider whether any new prescriptions for the realization of

(Mrs. des Iles, Trinidad and Tobago)

that human right might be detrimental to the interests of the entities on the list of Trust and Non-Self-Governing Territories. CARICOM would closely follow developments concerning that issue, which was of importance to the Caribbean region as a whole.

30. The CHAIRMAN informed delegations that the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions on agenda items 107 and 108 (a) had been extended to 3 November 1993, at 1 p.m.

31. Mr. ABDELLAH (Tunisia), referring to agenda item 107, said that the development of the situation both in South Africa and with regard to the Palestinian problem encouraged optimism. In that connection, he welcomed the progress made in South Africa towards achieving a united and non-racial society, as demonstrated by the planned establishment of an executive transitional council and the first democratic elections in April 1994. Tunisia, which had participated actively in the multilateral negotiations on the Middle East, welcomed the historic step that had just been taken by Israel and PLO in adopting a declaration of principles and he reiterated the hope that the process under way would lead to a just and lasting settlement on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), as well as the relevant recommendations of the General Assembly.

32. That notable progress must now however conceal the appearance of new forms of racism, such as the odious practice of ethnic purification in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina. His delegation once again urged the international community to take urgent steps in response to the aggression committed against the Bosnian Muslims. Hesitation or indifference with regard to that human tragedy only encouraged the continuation of the crime of ethnic purging.

33. Racism manifested itself also through acts of xenophobia and intolerance against vulnerable groups, like migrant workers. Alarmed by the increase in the mistreatment of workers, his delegation reiterated its appeal to host countries to strive further to contain manifestations of racial tensions and eliminate the causes. Those countries should strengthen mechanisms for preventing racist acts and incitement of hatred in order to protect migrant workers and promote a spirit of tolerance. The host countries should also endeavour to normalize the situation of immigrants by protecting their dignity, interests and acquired rights. Administrative restrictions and turning immigrants away could not solve the problem of emigration. The best way to control migratory flows was rather to support development in the countries of origin by increasing and diversifying investments and guaranteeing access to foreign markets for their products. With that in mind, the President of the Tunisian Republic had spoken in favour of the co-development approach in the interest of the two parties. In the same vein, he had expressed his views before the European Parliament during the summer in Strasbourg, reiterating his proposal for the adoption of a charter between host countries and the countries of origin of the North African population in Europe.

34. Therefore, his delegation supported the decision of the Commission on Human Rights to appoint a special rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

(Mr. Abdellah, Tunisia)

35. Tunisia also supported the draft programme of action for the third decade to combat racism and racial discrimination, since the previous decades had not achieved adequate results.

36. His delegation was, however, convinced that international action must be backed by a national will to eliminate racism. In that connection, Tunisia attached great importance to education as a means of instilling into individuals the principles of equality and non-discrimination, and noted with satisfaction that the draft programme of action for the third decade stressed the role of education in the fight against racism.

37. The World Conference on Human Rights had clearly stated in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action that the elimination of all forms of racism was a priority task for the international community and for a world programme to promote human rights.

38. Mrs. RAOELINA (Madagascar) said that, while two decades to combat racism and racial discrimination had produced results, new forms of racism were emerging whose targets were migrant workers, refugees and ethnic minorities. During the third decade, much thought would have to be devoted to that widespread phenomenon in order to design methods of teaching and training the population on how to deal with it. Governments, United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, international and regional organizations and non-governmental organizations must join forces and redouble their efforts towards that end.

39. Following the establishment on 23 September 1993 in South Africa of a Transitional Executive Council and the lifting of international economic sanctions against that country as requested by the President of the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC) on 24 September 1993 before the Special Committee against Apartheid, South Africa was planning to hold elections in April 1994 leading to the establishment of a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa; however, as shown by the recent acts of violence, which her delegation condemned, the transitional period was fraught with difficulties. She extended congratulations to the President of the Republic of South Africa and the President of ANC on the award of the Nobel Peace Prize.

40. In view of the upsurge of racial and ethnic violence in many parts of the world, she supported the decision taken by the Commission on Human Rights to appoint a special rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. She welcomed the decision to establish an international tribunal for the prosecution of persons responsible for serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in the territory of the former Yugoslavia since 1991.

41. After stressing the relevance of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination she noted with pleasure that the Secretary-General had, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 47/111, taken appropriate measures to provide for the financing of the Committee from the regular budget of the United Nations.

(Mrs. Raoelina, Madagascar)

42. She also welcomed the signing at Washington on 13 September 1993 of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements between the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, which constituted a giant step forward in the search for a comprehensive political settlement in the Middle East.

43. She stressed the importance of the universal application of the principle of the right of peoples to self-determination, a necessary precondition to the full enjoyment of all human rights, and congratulated the Special Rapporteur on the question of the use of mercenaries on the quality of his report (A/48/385) and his pertinent recommendations.

44. Mr. JAAFARI (Syrian Arab Republic) drew attention to a new phenomenon engendered by certain opponents of the principle, the sacred nature and the legitimacy of the right of peoples under foreign occupation and colonial domination to self-determination. After years of tyranny and injustice, during which the occupying Powers had refused to implement the principle of the right of peoples to self-determination, new political and legal concepts were now being put forward to replace that principle. Thus, autonomy had been converted into a form of self-determination and, what was even more amazing, was that the valiant Palestinian people had been granted, as a privilege and on a trial basis, the "benefits" of provisional autonomy until it "came of age" and proved itself capable of enduring the unjust treatment inflicted upon it by the Israeli occupants.

45. The exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination was the noblest experience known to man and no one had the right, regardless of the reasons cited, to decide the fate of peoples by invoking the new international order. The Syrian Arab Republic was concerned that as matters stood the very legal foundations of international legitimacy might be undermined, thus reviving some methods of the cold war which had been used to fight against many countries of the third world.

46. The subjective interpretation of the principle of self-determination stripped it of any legal and moral value. States were therefore legitimately concerned about the use of double standards in the efforts to combat racial discrimination, aggression and occupation. Moreover, recent international upheavals had spawned new areas of tension while, apart from very few exceptions, the previous crises were yet to be settled. His delegation was convinced that matters were progressing favourably despite occasional setbacks. Nevertheless, it noted with concern that the concept of "intermediate solution" that tended to put aggressors and victims on an equal footing was becoming increasingly widespread. The attempt to apply that concept at any cost appeared to be one of the main factors behind the considerable intensification of political and financial efforts made by the United Nations with a view to settling the world's problems and mentioned by the Secretary-General in his annual report on the work of the Organization.

47. The General Assembly had continually adopted explicit resolutions that clearly showed that the United Nations rejected all arguments aimed at preventing peoples from exercising their right to self-determination. Thus, resolution 47/82 called upon all States to implement fully and faithfully all

(Mr. Jaafari, Syrian Arab Republic)

the relevant resolutions regarding the exercise of the right to self-determination and independence by peoples under colonial and foreign domination, and reaffirmed the legitimacy of the struggle of peoples for independence, territorial integrity, national unity and liberation from colonial domination, apartheid and foreign occupation, in all its forms and by all available means.

48. All other rights emanated from the right of peoples to self-determination. It was an inalienable, non-transferable, immutable and imprescriptible right which was the very basis of the existence, the rights and the obligations of States. The right of peoples to defend their sovereignty and territorial integrity was based on that right. Those who were attempting to promote the concepts of "limited sovereignty", "conditional sovereignty" or "restricted sovereignty" were seeking to introduce into international humanitarian law legal principles that were contrary to the very nature of international relations and to circumvent the principles of self-determination and full respect for the sovereignty of States enshrined in international law.

49. He supported the measures for the complete elimination of apartheid and support for the establishment of a united, non-racial and democratic South Africa proposed in the report of the Secretary-General (A/48/423) on the draft programme of action for the third decade to combat racism and racial discrimination (1993-2003), and endorsed the aims and objectives of that decade. He also noted with satisfaction that the report established that racial discrimination was clearly linked to intolerance, ethnic discrimination, other contemporary forms of racism and xenophobia directed towards foreigners, refugees and immigrant workers.

50. Unfortunately, all of those forms of intolerance, exclusion and oppression were not exclusive to South Africa. Indeed, feelings of ethnic, religious and cultural superiority were spreading almost everywhere in the world and the number of "chosen" peoples had never been as large. In that regard, he wished to request that the latest reports should refer to the dangers inherent in such phenomena.

51. For its part, the Middle East had long been seeking the means to put an end to aggression and war, to establish a just and comprehensive peace and to live in stability and prosperity. Decades had gone by since the international community had established the legal basis for a peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict by successively adopting hundreds of resolutions on the question. Regrettably, Israel had so far only complied with half of one of those resolutions, namely General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 1947 on the partition of Palestine, of which it had implemented only those provisions providing for the creation of "the State of Israel" while disregarding the portion concerning the Palestinian territory which it hoped one day to annex. Since then, the expansionist efforts and acts of provocation of the Israelis, who had arrogantly and persistently denied the rights of others, had reached the stage where they could no longer be ignored. When the Madrid Peace Conference was convened, all the countries which had agreed to go to the negotiating table had done so on clear bases, namely, on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978) and of the principle of the return of the occupied Arab territories in exchange for peace. Today, two years after the

(Mr. Jaafari, Syrian Arab Republic)

convening of the Conference, the negotiations were still bogged down. Israel had sought to convince others that the Middle East had been transformed overnight into a region of peace and prosperity, that the Israeli occupation had come to an end and that the Palestinian, Lebanese, Jordanian and Syrian territories had been returned to their rightful owners. The leaders of Israel had even gone so far as to propose tourism and economic projects for the region as well as joint development plans at an astronomical cost, while peace was still only a dream.

52. The Syrian Arab Republic wished to make it clear that there could be no peace in the Middle East while the territories remain occupied and while the rights of the peoples continued to be violated. Likewise, there could be no "limited" peace, peace subject to conditions or an unjust peace. Moreover, in order to establish peace a comprehensive solution must first be reached and the courage must be found to do away with the law of the jungle which spared no one. The Arab parties had repeatedly declared that they would welcome peace initiatives and had emphasized that the Madrid Peace Conference should result in comprehensive and just peace agreements which guaranteed the rights of all parties, including the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination in their own territory and the right of the Arab peoples to recover their occupied territories. The Syrian Arab Republic, for its part, would continue to cooperate with the two States which were co-sponsors of the peace process, since it sought a genuine and comprehensive peace and not merely "a half" or "a quarter" of peace.

53. The World Conference on Human Rights had adopted a large number of recommendations on racism and racial discrimination. In addition, the United Nations had elaborated numerous international instruments to combat racism and racial discrimination and to extirpate the roots of the evil. Nevertheless, and despite all of those efforts, there still existed in many parts of the world a growing gulf between words and deeds. Moreover, through a disintegrating veneer of civilization, even more odious forms of racism, racial discrimination and moral obscurantism were making their appearance. The practitioners of such phenomena and all those in the civilized world who protected them should be ashamed.

54. It would be a mistake to think that the new barbaric concepts of "ethnic cleansing" and "religious cleansing" had made a sudden appearance. They were in fact only the logical extension of a series of operations of "cultural and intellectual cleansing" which one civilization had continuously pursued for centuries against other civilizations. Indeed, exclusion, intellectual alienation and informational hegemony engendered contempt, hate and rejection.

55. Mr. MARUYAMA (Japan) said that the Committee should adopt a realistic and constructive approach which took into consideration, as the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights had observed in his introductory statement, the drastic changes which the world had undergone in the area of racism, racial discrimination and the right to self-determination. Japan shared the view of the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights that racism and racial discrimination were obstacles to ensuring respect for human rights both nationally and internationally and agreed that the Centre for Human Rights should continue to provide coordination for related activities within the United

(Mr. Maruyama, Japan)

Nations system. In that connection, the proposed launching of a third decade to combat racism and racial discrimination would give new impetus to the struggle. Generally speaking, his delegation was not enthusiastic about establishing new mandates through the launching of Special Decades or Years, since such events did not in themselves solve problems unless realistic means of achieving their aims were devised. Although the Second Decade was coming to an end, some elements of the Programme of Action had not yet been implemented. The Committee should explore ways of avoiding the same failures during the third decade and ensure that that decade responded to the needs which had arisen as a result of the changes that had taken place in the world. His delegation welcomed the suggestions contained in the report of the Secretary-General (A/48/423) and believed that it would perhaps be useful to amend the title of the third decade in order to more precisely identify its objectives. It also supported the recommendations of the Secretary-General concerning the coordination of United Nations activities to implement the third decade. At the midpoint of the decade, a comprehensive review of the programme of action should be undertaken which would benefit from reviews on an annual basis, as suggested in the report of the Secretary-General.

56. In view of the growing importance of contemporary forms of intolerance and xenophobia, his delegation supported the idea of consolidating all programmes that were being carried out in that area by the United Nations and its specialized agencies. It also supported frequent and closer contact between bodies that shared the same concerns.

57. No programme could come to fruition, however, without the necessary financial support. In view of the new mandates that had been given to the Centre for Human Rights, his delegation believed that the Centre had a legitimate claim to an increased share of resources.

58. In South Africa, the Middle East and Cambodia and elsewhere in the world, changes marked the beginning of a more democratic era. In order to overcome the remaining obstacles, the international community must show solidarity in its efforts.

59. His delegation fully supported the efforts being made to create a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa and to accelerate the multi-party negotiating process. It urged all parties in South Africa to prevent the disruption of the transition to democracy. For its part, Japan would continue to provide support for the eradication of apartheid and other forms of racial discrimination, including assistance to the victims of institutionalized racism.

60. His delegation welcomed the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements by the leaders of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, and hoped that that agreement would lead to a real and lasting peace as smoothly and quickly as possible. The Japanese Government also intended to extend approximately $200 million in assistance to the Palestinians over the following two years.

61. In face of the large number of conflicts over self-determination, his delegation wished to emphasize that the right to self-determination and the defence of one's ethnic group were no justification for violence. "Ethnic

(Mr. Maruyama, Japan)

cleansing" and other forms of brutality perpetrated in the name of self-determination must be renounced.

62. The Third Committee should pursue its work in such a manner as to contribute to the constructive solution of conflicts over self-determination. Drawing the Committee's attention to the letter from the Chairman of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination contained in document A/48/18, annex VI, he expressed the hope that the General Assembly at its current session would adopt the resolution under discussion, which reflected the changes that had taken place in the world and that the Third Committee would, in the same spirit, adopt other resolutions on various items, which would promote confidence in its work.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.